

Discipline Policy as reviewed and amended July 2013

Our whole-school approach to Discipline resulted in the realisation that good behaviour should always be high-lighted and rewarded for its own sake, but also as a method of discouraging undesirable behaviour.

Discipline for Learning promotes a whole-school approach to Discipline based on a limited number of rules which are ‘taught’ to the pupil, and a consistent system of behaviour checks and rewards.

When an opportunity arose, as a result of the revised Curriculum to devote a full day to in-school planning, the Staff agreed to look at DFL with a view to introducing the system to the school. Adrian Smith from England facilitated the planning day. He later met with the Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principals for a further planning session. He also facilitated a session with members of the Parents’ Association.

The staff then collaborated with the pupils in drawing up six School Rules.

SCHOOL RULES

1. Follow instructions straight away and so you will have a happy day.
2. Have homework done and be on time, morning, break-time and going to line.
3. Raise your hand when you want to speak, to shout out loud can sound like cheek.
4. To and from the class and around the school, quiet orderly walking is the rule.
5. Bully not, share a lot, speak kindly and return what you got.
6. Be prepared for work and play, keep yourself tidy along the way.

These rules are learned by all pupils from Junior Infants onwards.

At the end of every day pupils who have followed the rules are rewarded by getting a stamp into their Stamp Book. Pupils are encouraged to get a stamp every day from their teacher. They may also get a stamp from other teachers who notice good behaviour or a kind deed. We encourage staff to “catch children being good”!

When children fill their Stamp Book they have an appointment with the Principal/Deputy Principal who commends their achievement by presenting them with a Special Award.

The children write their names in the *Golden Book*.

If pupils fail to follow the School Rules a set of Behaviour Checks are employed as follows:

Check One is a warning.

Check Two involves the pupil being moved to sit in a designated place in the classroom for ten minutes.

Check Three involves the pupil and teacher discussing behaviour for a few minutes either at break-time or after school. If the behaviour persists Check Four applies.

Check Four means that the pupil is moved to another classroom for ten minutes.

When Check Four applies pupils will complete a Reflection Sheet as an opportunity to make amends.

Check Five applies if the pupil continues to ignore School Rules. The pupil is sent to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

The Checks are cumulative, in order, discussed with the children and certain to occur.

If school rules are broken by pupils while representing the school in sporting or other activities then pupils will be omitted for selection on the next occasion.

The philosophy of *Discipline For Learning* can help children avoid being checked by focusing on positive influences.

Staff members are encouraged to use the “2 for 1” rule to get the desired behaviour.

For example while lining up after recreation staff will praise 2 pupils who are behaving appropriately. Invariably this elicits the desired behaviour from the other pupils.

Other reward systems employed include “Líne an Lae”. This involves awarding a token to the class/classes that line up and walk appropriately to and from the class or around the school.

When a class earns 10 tokens they are rewarded with a “treat” agreed by the class and class teacher. Tokens can also be awarded to a class who are “noticed” by any other staff member while walking to or from the class or around the school.

As well as awarding tokens for “Líne an Lae” a trophy will be awarded for “Líne na Seachtaine”. Teams on Yard Duty will record the winners of “Líne an Lae” on a daily basis in the Yard Duty Book as well as the names of pupils who haven’t followed school rules during recreation. Each Yard Duty team will appoint a member who is responsible for passing on the book to the team on duty on the following day.

It is essential that all teachers are active and consistent in giving instructions and awarding tokens. Special Needs Assistants will support teachers at lining up, prompting pupils as appropriate.

Other motivators/rewards employed in the classroom include “Marbles in the Jar”, Star Charts and other visual reminders of good behaviour. “Pinkies” are awarded to pupils in 6th Class for extra effort.

Pupils in 5th and 6th Classes receive weekly scores/ratings on a Friday. These scores are marked out of ten and are awarded for Conduct and Application. Parents sign the

scores at the weekend and they are checked by the Principal at the beginning of the following week. Pupils are encouraged from time to time to work out their average ratings. If towards the end of the School Year a pupil's ratings are below an average of 15 then they know that they will not travel on the school tour.

This has proven to be a very effective method of discouraging undesirable behaviour.

If a child engages in serious misbehaviour i.e. bullying, spitting, using foul language, stealing or using physical force then Check Five is implemented and parents informed. In such cases pupils may have to draw up and sign a Contract with the Principal.

Individual Behaviour Plans

There is a small number of pupils for whom the whole-school approach to discipline is not effective. Such pupils follow an Individual Behaviour Plan that is agreed with the pupil, parent, teacher and the Special Needs Assistant where appropriate. This usually entails on-going reinforcement with tasks broken down into small, achievable steps.

There are occasions when challenging behaviour presents. This usually results from an underlying emotional or sensory difficulty. It can be defined as “behaviour of such intensity, frequency and duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or delay access to, and use of ordinary facilities” (Emerson et al)

Staff members have a duty of care to intervene in order to prevent pupils hurting themselves or others, or putting themselves at risk by absconding from the school premises. On such occasions positive handling may have to be used to move a pupil to a safer place. Where possible 2 staff members will be involved in any incident that necessitates moving a pupil.

Nurture Groups

From time to time pupils with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties will be given intensive support in group settings. This will entail individual teaching and behavioural support with emphasis on building relationships. It will also involve working closely with parents.

Pupils in our Nurture Groups will also be offered Music Therapy. Such pupils will also be among our targeted pupils for support under the School Completion Programme through which they can participate in after school, community and summer programmes.

Language

Staff members are aware of the importance of language while addressing issues related to discipline and therefore are careful always to distinguish or separate the behaviour from the child.

We are also acutely aware of the importance of emotional literacy. Pupils are assisted to learn and use appropriate language that can help them to express their feelings in an appropriate and acceptable way.

A positive, caring environment is nurtured and pupils are encouraged to talk openly about how they feel especially when they feel angry or frustrated. In this way we hope

to avert some incidents of challenging behaviour and encourage empathy and understanding among pupils and staff.

Our Discipline Policy was reviewed to comply with the enactment of legislation related to the Education Act and the Education Welfare Act. We were obliged to define Serious Misbehaviour and Gross Misbehaviour and make provision for management of same, even though such behaviours are a rare occurrence.

Serious Misbehaviour

1. Bullying: “Repeated, deliberate behaviour designed to physically or emotionally hurt, belittle or make fun of another”. It may manifest itself as fighting, threatening (either verbally or by using gestures), name-calling, excluding or ignoring.
2. Using physical force in a premeditated manner resulting in injury to another pupil or staff member.
3. Spitting at another pupil or staff member or spitting on another’s belongings.
4. Using foul or offensive language to another pupil or staff member.
5. Stealing –taking from another without permission.
6. Failing to follow school rules while representing the school in sporting or other activities, on school tours or outings.
7. Deliberately damaging school property or the property of another including deliberately leaving taps on.

Procedures

1. Principal to be contacted and where possible to attend to incident
2. Incident Report Sheet to be filled out and returned to Principal
3. Parents to be notified using standard letter and/or by phone call and where deemed necessary invited to meet Principal
4. Parents and pupil will be given an opportunity to respond.

Sanctions

- *Child will report to Principal at recreation times for three days following the incident
and/or
- *a one-match-ban will be imposed if incident occurs while representing the school in sporting activity
and/or
- *a contract will be drawn up and signed by pupil and parent
and/or
- *supervised cleaning of damaged property will take place if appropriate and child will write an apology and explanation for what they have done

Suspension and Expulsion

As per “Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools” (National Education and Welfare Board), suspension is defined as
“*requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days.*”

The Board of Management formally delegates to the Principal the authority to suspend a pupil in the following circumstances:

- ❖ Pupil's behaviour has had a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils
- ❖ The pupil's continued presence in the school at this time constitutes a threat to safety
- ❖ The pupil is responsible for serious damage to property

Fair procedures based on principles of natural justice will be followed when proposing to suspend or expel a pupil. Fair procedures have two essential parts:

- the right to be heard
- the right to impartiality

In the event of suspension being implemented a Behaviour Plan will be drawn up with targets/goals agreed by Principal, parents and pupil. Suspension will be for a maximum of 3 school days.

Where an immediate suspension is considered by the Principal to be warranted for reasons of the safety of the pupil, other pupils, staff or others, a preliminary investigation will be conducted to establish the case for the imposition of the suspension. A formal investigation will take place immediately following suspension.

When a pupil returns to school after suspension a Contract will be drawn up, outlining clear improvement targets, and will be signed by the pupil, parents and Principal. Initially the contract will be reviewed on a weekly basis.

Gross Misbehaviour

1. Setting fire to school property.
2. Interfering with fire protection apparatus.
3. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/member of staff/pupil or to themselves.

Procedures

1. Principal/Deputy or Assistant Principal to be contacted and where possible to attend to incident.
2. Incident Report Sheet to be filled out and returned to Principal.
3. Parent/Guardian to be contacted immediately.
4. A meeting of the board of Management to be called.

Sanctions

1. Chairperson/Principal to sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents.
2. Expulsion will be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6) i.e "No pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without prior consent of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality"

Any incident of serious misbehaviour may be reported to the Board of Management.

In the event of continuous serious misbehaviour the Board reserves the right to authorise the Chairperson or Principal to exclude a pupil or pupils from school. The maximum initial period of such exclusion shall be three school days.

If a further period of suspension is deemed necessary the Board will meet to determine such suspension as per Rule 130, Rules for National Schools.

This Policy was reviewed and amended in November 2010, November/December 2011 and again in October 2012.
The policy will continue to be reviewed annually.